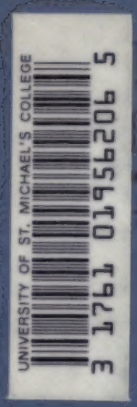
THE CHARM OF FINE MANNERS

BY MRS. HELEN E. STARRETT



Forever yours Fr. Kelly

Jean Vale

Helen Ekin Starrett

THE CHARM OF FINE MANNERS

BEING A SERIES OF LETTERS TO A DAUGHTER

BY

HELEN EKIN STARRETT

PRINCIPAL EMERITUS OF THE STARRETT SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Who does not delight in fine manners? Their charm cannot be predicted or overstated. . . . It is even true that grace is more beautiful than beauty.

—"Social Aims," R. W. Emerson

PHILADELPHIA & LONDON

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THIRTEENTH IMPRESSION

PRINTED IN UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

To my own Daughters
Katharine Starrett Whitton
and
Helen Starrett Dinwiddie;
and to
My seven Granddaughters,
Pauline Helen
Therese Donnie
Katharine Nancy
and
Helen Ruth.
also to
The Alumnæ of the Starrett School for Girls
this volume is affectionately
DEDICATED

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INTRODUCTION

This little book, originally prepared for and addressed to young daughters of my own, and also to many young girls, very dear to me, to whom I stood in the relation of foster mother as teacher and guide, might have passed into the permanent oblivion of "out of print" but for two incidents: The book fell into the hands of one who had for twenty-five years been at the head of an important department in a great Normal School.* Unsolicited she wrote, "I wish a copy of it could be placed in the hands of every girl when she enters high school *and made a part of her course* . . . I wish I knew of some way of bringing it into notice so that it would become as popular as the last new novel." Another mother, graduate of one of our modern colleges for women and earnest teacher of her own children, accidentally came upon a copy of the

*Mrs. Margaret S. Mooney, of the State Normal College, Department of English, Albany, N, Y.

book. She became absorbed in reading it and then remarked, "This book might have been written yesterday, so pertinent is it to the needs of the young girls of to-day." These opinions, in connection with many similar ones and together with the appreciation and enterprise of the present publishers, are responsible for the present edition.

The greatest writer upon manners in all literature, and also the most voluminous, is the American Sage, Emerson. His essays are constantly interspersed with comments upon or suggestions for the acquiring of good manners. Here are a few from his Essay on Behavior. "The power of manners is incessant—an element as unconcealable as fire—no one can resist their influence. . . . There are certain manners which are learned in good society of such force that, if a person have them, he or she . . . is everywhere welcome, though with-

out beauty or wealth or genius . . . When we reflect on their persuasive and cheering force, how they recommend, prepare and draw people together . . . how manners make the fortune of the ambitious youth; that for the most part his manners marry him, and for the most part he marries manners [especially true of girls]; when we think what keys they are and to what secrets; what high lessons and inspiring tokens of character they convey . . . we see what range the subject has and what relations to convenience, power and beauty." And Emerson even gives this little hint. "There is no beautifier of complexion, or form, or behavior like the wish to scatter joy and not pain around us."

Yet in all his comments on manners, Emerson emphasizes the fact that the basis of all good manners is good behavior, which is always the expression of a kind and generous nature. It is the province of the teacher of

good manners to impress this truth on young people. In the words of Emerson "to teach them to stifle the base and choose the generous expression and make them know how much happier the generous behaviours are." And this teaching "must be intrusted to the restraining force of custom and proverbs and familiar rules of behavior, impressed on young people in their school days."

It is to the elucidation of the principles of good behavior that underlie all fine manners that the chapters of this little book are devoted. If they shall prove helpful to those who teach and those who learn; to parents, solicitous for the best for their daughters; to teachers who would help to show their pupils the path of life and peace; and especially to young girls who are aspiring to the highest and best things in life, the most earnest aim and gratifying success of the writer's life will have been achieved.

HELEN EKIN STARRETT

LETTERS TO A DAUGHTER.

LETTER I.

BEHAVIOR AND MANNERS.

My Dear Daughter:—One of the greatest blessings I could wish for you, as you pass out from the guardianship of home into life with its duties and trials, is that you should possess the power of winning love and friends. With this power, the poor girl is rich; without it, the richest girl is poor. In the main, this power of winning friends and love depends upon two things: behavior and manners. Between these there is an important distinction, but one is the outgrowth of the other. The root of good manners is good behavior. Consider with me for a little what each implies.

Behavior is a revealer of real character. It has especially to do with the more serious duties and relations of life. Its greatest importance is in the home. How well do I remember a visit, made in my youth, to a school friend whom I had learned to admire greatly for her superior intellect, quick wit, power of acquiring knowledge, and ability to recite well in class. In her home she was rude and disrespectful and even disobedient to her parents; cross and sarcastic with her brothers and sisters; selfish and indolent in all matters pertaining to the work of the household. What a disenchantment was my experience! That great and good man, who has written so many noble precepts about the conduct of life, Mr. Emerson, in speaking of and praising a noble citizen, says: "Never was such force, good meaning, good sense, good action, combined with such lovely domestic behavior, such modesty, and

persistent preference for others." This was what was lacking in my school friend: lovely domestic behavior. Nothing could compensate for this deficiency.

What was needed in this young girl in order that she might have exhibited in her daily life a "lovely domestic behavior"? An almost total reconstruction of character; such a cultivation of the moral sense as would have made it a matter of conscience with her to "honor her father and mother," to be respectful to them and desirous of pleasing and serving them. Selfishness was the main cause of her ill-treatment of her brothers and sisters, as it was of her indolence, and her indifference to the performance of her share of the household duties. Her behavior in the home was such that she repelled, rather than attracted, affection. Her own personal preference, mood, feeling, were constantly allowed to control her conduct;

and the deep underlying deficiency in her character was lack of a tender conscience and of a sense of duty.

Lovely domestic behavior is the natural outgrowth and expression of a beautiful, harmonious, and lovely character. In order to behave beautifully, we must cultivate assiduously the graces of the spirit. We must persistently strive against selfishness, ill-temper, irritability, indolence. It is impossible for the selfish or ill-tempered girl to win love and friends. Generosity, kindness, self-denial, industry—these are the traits which inspire love and win friends. These are the graces that will make the humblest home beautiful and happy, and without which the costliest mansion is a mere empty shell.

One more point in regard to behavior I wish to impress upon your mind as of very great importance, although it relates less to the home and more to

general society. I mean that of modest behavior as distinguished from forwardness and boldness. One of the greatest charms of young girlhood is modesty; one of the greatest blemishes in the character of any young person, especially of any young girl or woman, is forwardness, boldness, pertness. The young girl who acts in such a manner as to attract attention in public; who speaks loudly, and jokes and laughs and tells stories in order to be heard by others than her immediate companions; who dresses conspicuously; who enjoys being the object of remark; who expresses opinions on all subjects with forward self-confidence, is rightly regarded by all thoughtful and cultivated people as one of the most disagreeable and obnoxious characters to be met with in society. Modesty is one of the loveliest of graces, and should be constantly cultivated.

And now you will see what I mean

by saying that the root of good manners is good behavior. In other words, good manners have their true and living root in moral qualities and the Christian graces. There is a certain surface display of manners which may be acquired and which may deceive and pass with those who do not know us intimately; but there is all the difference between such superficial good manners and those which are real, that there is between the cut bouquet of flowers which delights for an hour or two and then withers away, and the living, growing plant which constantly delights us with fresh beauty and bloom.

What are the characteristics of the agreeable and beautiful manners that are the ornament and charm of the well-behaved girl? First we should place gentleness, quietness, and serenity or self-possession. It has been well said by an observing social critic,

that the person who has no manners at all has good manners. What is meant by this, and there is a deep truth in it, is that gentle and quiet manners do not attract attention at all. Their greatest charm is their unobtrusiveness, just as the charm and distinguishing mark of a well-dressed person is that the dress is not striking or obtrusive. You can infer from this how inconsistent with good manners is heat and exaggeration in conversation. It is a just complaint among refined and cultivated people that many, even of the well-educated young women of the present day, talk too loudly and vehemently; are given to exaggeration of statement and slang expressions. The greatest blemish of the conversation and manners of the young people of to-day is obtrusiveness and exaggeration. By obtrusiveness I mean a style of speech and manners that attracts attention and remark; by exaggeration I mean the

too constant use of the superlative in conversation, and a certain incongruity and inappropriateness of expression which is very offensive to the cultivated taste. Such expressions as "perfectly awful," "perfectly beautiful," "too lovely for anything," "hateful," "horrible," may constantly be heard in conversation upon trivial and unimportant subjects in companies of young people whose educational opportunities and social advantages would lead us to expect a very different style of conversation. So of incongruous and inappropriate expressions. "My grandfather and grandmother died on the same day of the year; wasn't it funny?" said a young miss to a companion. She meant that it was a strange circumstance or coincidence. It was the wise remark of a great man that "culture kills exaggeration." True and careful culture should also weed out from our beautiful and expressive

English language all such incongruities and blemishes of speech as I have indicated.

Referring once more to what I have said about obtrusiveness, forwardness, or boldness, being an unpleasant characteristic of the manners of many young people of the present day, I want to impress upon you that much of this boldness arises from lack of deference or reverence for parents, teachers, and older people. This lack of deference is a great defect of character in any young person. It is painfully noticeable in many homes where children never seem to think of paying any respect to the presence of their parents or older people; where they will monopolize conversation at table, interrupt their parents and guests to ask irrelevant questions or relate irrelevant incidents, enter a room abruptly, and, without waiting to learn whether any one is speaking, at once begin to speak of

something pertaining to their own affairs. All this is bad behavior and bad manners. It is morally wrong as well. God has commanded that we shall honor our father and mother; and one beautiful precept of scripture is, "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head and honor the face of the old man."

To sum up in the short space of one letter the more important truths I would impress upon your mind in regard to behavior and manners, let me say this: There are good manuals of etiquette and social form which should be read and studied by all young people. There are, also, constant opportunities for observation of the conduct and manners of polite people, by which young people may and should profit and learn to observe the outward forms of society. These are easily learned and practiced; but the finest, best, most genuine good manners can never be acquired except as they become the

natural expression of gentleness, kindness, intelligence, respect for parents and elders, and an earnest desire to do good to our fellow beings. Strive, my dear child, to cherish these graces in your heart, and good behavior and good manners will naturally follow.

LETTER II.

SELF-CONTROL AND SELF-CULTURE.

My Dear Daughter:—One great and difficult lesson is given to each of us to learn in this life, which must be learned if we ever hope to live happy or useful lives. It is the lesson of self-control. Parents and teachers and circumstances may help or hinder in the learning of this lesson; but it depends mainly upon yourself, upon your own individual will, whether you shall learn it or not. It is the first lesson which wise parents and teachers strive to teach a child. It is the fundamental, the all-important lesson of life. It extends to every department of our nature and affects every act and event of our lives. Take notice with me how the possession or non-possession of the power of self-control

affects the lives of young people in a few particulars.

Certain self-evident duties are imposed upon every rational being. One of the first of these is the duty of being usefully employed a large portion of our time. It is probable that nearly all young people have a certain dislike for work, and self-control must come in to help them do the work that belongs to them to do. It may help you in acquiring this self-control to reflect often what a really great thing it is to be able to compel yourself to do from a sense of duty what you are naturally disinclined to do; also what an unworthy and, indeed, contemptible thing it is not to be able to make yourself do what you know you ought to do. You are perhaps disinclined, for instance, to rise when you should in the morning. You feel disposed to indulge your ease and comfort, and to lie in bed when you know you should be awake and

preparing for the day. Here is one of the very instances in which if you will learn to control and compel yourself you will soon reap substantial reward. The more you indulge yourself, the harder does the task of rising and getting ready for the day become. But say to yourself, "I will waken right away," rise and walk around a little, and you will be surprised to find how soon the habit of prompt rising will become easy. You have your morning duties to perform, or your lessons to learn. If you say to yourself, when it is time you should begin, "I will not loiter, but immediately set about my work or study," you will find in the very act and determination a help and strength, and pleasure even, which you can never imagine before you have experienced it. God has so made us that in the very performance of duty, however trivial, there is a reward and strength and a very high kind of pleas-

ure. But we need firm self-control to compel ourselves thus to do our duty. I shall rejoice if any words of mine lead you to test for yourself the truth of what I have said.

Self-control should extend to our speech, temper, and pleasures. To be able to control the tongue is rightly esteemed one of the greatest of moral achievements. You remember what the apostle James says, that "if any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle [control] the whole body." It is so easy to say cross or unkind words ; so easy to make slighting or gossiping remarks about companions or friends ; so hard to efface the painful effects of such hasty or ill-considered speech. It is so easy to make a petulant or disrespectful reply to parents or teachers when they reprove ; so much harder, yet so much better, to acknowledge a fault and feel and express sorrow for wrong-

doing. Your own conscience and consciousness tell you how much happier you feel when you have done the latter. Yet you need, over and over again, to fortify yourself against temptation to hasty or ill-natured or improper speech by determining beforehand that you will not give way to the temptation; that you will control yourself. And whenever you have allowed yourself to be overcome by such temptation you should make it the occasion of serious reflection and earnest resolve to be more guarded in future. You will have attained a great deal in the direction of high and noble character when you have learned to control your speech. It is the same in regard to controlling your temper. But there is one truth of which I can assure you : If you will learn to be silent and not speak at all when you feel that your temper is getting or has gotten the better of you, you will soon get the better of your temper.

There is no such efficient discipline for a hasty temper as determined, self-imposed silence. Then, too, there is a dignity about silence under provocation that is impressive and effective. The greatest disadvantage at which any person can be placed in the eyes of companions and friends is that of losing control of one's tongue as well as of one's temper. In nearly every case where we receive provocation or affront, speech may be silver, but "silence is golden." The person who keeps control of his temper controls everyone.

Self-control, once acquired, will be the most important factor in helping to shape your life rightly in every direction. It will keep you from hurtful indulgence in mere pleasure; from harmful indulgence in rich or improper foods; from too much dissipation of time and thought in social enjoyment. It will help you to leave the society of companions and other pleas-

ures in order to put your mind upon your studies or your tasks; help you, when you find lessons hard and long, and that earnest work is required to learn them, to perform that long and earnest work; help you, when you feel disposed to give way to indisposition or indolence, to hold steadily on till your tasks, no matter what they are, are accomplished.

And as good behavior is the root of good manners, so self-control is the root of all true self-culture. We hear a great deal now-a-days about culture, cultured people, cultivated society, etc., and it is a good and natural wish to possess culture and to be classed among cultured people. Intelligence and good manners are the only passport into the charmed circle. Self-control will enable us to become possessed of both. It will enable us to restrain ourselves from all rude, loud, hasty, ungentle speech and action, help us to modulate

our voices, and even cultivate our laughter. It will also enable us, through mental application and effort, to acquire knowledge. So abundant are the intellectual treasures now brought within the reach of everyone by the cheapness of standard educational works of every kind, that the young person who is not intelligent through reading and study has only himself or herself to blame. Self-control will help you to study and learn faithfully when you are in school; it will help you to decide upon and carry out some useful course of reading and study if you are not in school; and this, even though you have many other duties to perform. In every town and village may be found persons competent to advise and direct courses of study and reading for those who have the energy to pursue them. You will have no excuse at any period of your life for failure to progress and improve

intellectually, except your own inability to compel yourself to make use of the opportunities that lie all around you.

It is hardly necessary for me to remind you of what you know so well, that in reading you should choose only the best books. We may without harm divert the mind for a little each day by light miscellaneous reading, but young people especially need to be warned against indiscriminate novel or story reading. Here again the virtue of self-control comes in to help do the right and avoid the wrong. If you discover that your taste is more for the improbable highly-wrought pages of fiction than for such works as are known to everyone as standard and improving, let it be a sign to you that you should summon your self-control and compel yourself to a different sort of reading. If you find that you cannot relish or fix your mind upon standard works of history, biography, travel, or any of the

many excellent books written to bring scientific knowledge within the comprehension of the general reader, then you may conclude rightly that your mind is in a very uncultivated state.

Your own efforts and determination —in other words, your power of self-control — alone can effect anything worthy in self-culture. To attain the power of self-control in a high degree is one of the greatest and most important aims we can set before us in life. I do not believe it can ever be attained in our own strength. To rightly control temper and speech and conduct requires help from the divine Spirit which is always around and over us, and within us, if we will but let our hearts be receptive to its influences. The greatest possible help to self-control is to learn in the moment of temptation to lift the heart to God in earnest aspiration for His help and guidance. A sense of the presence of God

is always a strength and help when we are conscious of earnest effort to do right. The Bible says: "It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." It is one of the great mysteries and yet one of the most evident truths of life, that we must work ourselves, and that God works in and with us, to accomplish any good thing. That you may know and realize this truth, and learn to find for yourself the comfort and support and strength of soul that comes from seeking after God, is my most earnest hope and prayer for you.

LETTER III.

AIMS IN LIFE.

My Dear Daughter:—There is no disputing the fact that in making plans for life very different motives and aims influence young girls from those which influence young men. Every right-minded and affectionate-natured young girl looks forward to, and hopes most of all to have, a home of her own, which it shall be her life-work to keep and guide. To prepare herself rightly to fulfill all the duties that belong to the mistress of a home, should be the one all-embracing aim of any young girl's life; but with this should be other aims, which may help to prepare her for vicissitudes, emergencies, or disasters, and also give her worthy occupation and interest in life should she

never be called to the duties of a wife and mother.

To speak first of preparation to become the mistress of a home, should Providence have such a future in store. What qualities are needed to insure that a woman shall be a happy home-keeper? Certainly, a good temper, a cheerful disposition, a willingness to give time and thought to the details of home-keeping, commonly called domestic cares, habits of order and neatness, and good health, so that one may both give and receive pleasure while discharging the duties of the home.

This thought of a possible future home, the abode of love and happiness, should be the greatest safeguard to every young girl in her acquaintance and association with young men. A high ideal of the exclusiveness of that affection which must be the foundation of every true and happy home, should constrain every young girl to exercise

the greatest possible caution in regard to the advances of acquaintances of the opposite sex. Not that there should be a prudish self-consciousness of manner, or a disposition to suspect matrimonial intentions in every young gentleman who is friendly and polite to her, but that all young men should be firmly prevented from coming into any intimacy of acquaintance or relationship that might cause unhappy and mortifying reflection in after-time. Treat all young men kindly and respectfully, if they are polite and respectful to you. Scorn to encourage any to make advances which you know you will one day repel. But in discouraging such advances, be kind and respectful. Never do or say anything wilfully to wound and give pain to the feelings. Remember that the sharpest grief of life, as well as its greatest happiness, is connected with the love-making period in the life of all good young peo-

ple, and never treat with frivolity or rudeness any earnest feeling on the part of anyone. The young girl who can rudely repulse the sincere advance of any honorable young man has some defect in her moral and affectional nature. And as for any advance by a gentleman, young or old, that is not respectful or sincere, a young girl is much to blame if it ever happens more than once. Chaffing and teasing about beaux and courtship and marriage are very unbecoming, and blur that delicacy of feeling which is the greatest charm in the relation between young people of opposite sexes.

Cherishing as the happiest ideal of life the possible future home of your own, you should still remember that it may never be yours, and should make such other provision for living your life as shall help you to the next best thing. The first and highest good, next after a home of your own,

is to be able to render to the world some service for which it will pay you, thus making you independent and enabling you to shape your life as you wish. You and all young girls of the present generation are happy in having avenues of useful remunerative occupation open to you on every hand, and society smiles and approves if you work at something to win independence and make money. It is scarcely necessary to remind you that in order to do effective paying work you must choose some specialty and acquire skill in its exercise before you can hope to earn any considerable wages or salary. While perfecting yourself in the specialty you will have abundant opportunity to observe that it takes patience, perseverance, and determination, to do any kind of work well. One great reason why so many fail of making any success in life is that they have not the power of sticking steadily to their work.

They get tired, and want to stop; whereas the true worker works though he is tired—works till it doesn't tire him to work; works on, unheeding the numerous temptations to turn aside to this or that diversion. There are now so many fields of honorable and profitable employment open to young girls that it is only necessary for you to choose what you will do. But make a choice to do something useful and worthy of your powers. You will be happier, and you will be a better and nobler woman, for so doing. You will be spared the discontent and restlessness of spirit which characterize the girl with nothing in particular to do, and who often becomes on this account a nuisance to all earnest people around her.

In order to fulfill aright the duties of any relation of life, the first requirement, the greatest necessity, next to a firm resolution and will, is good health.

Without good health there is no substantial foundation for anything earthly. Good health is the fountain of human enjoyment and the greatest of earthly riches. It is the great beautifier; it is the great preservative of good looks. How strange, then, that so many girls are so careless, so provokingly careless, of this priceless blessing! How strange that they will wear clothing that they know tends to break down their health; tight corsets that compress the lungs and spoil the natural shape of the body; tight shoes that interfere with the circulation of blood, and make their noses and hands red, and give them predisposition to colds and coughs and nervous headaches, all of which put to severe tests the patience and affection of those around them. Good health is always attractive; ill-health, invalidism, nervousness, are very apt to be repellant. Better good health than beauty, if one

were obliged to choose—which one is not, for good health is one of the chief elements of beauty.

So, if you aim first to be good and kind and intelligent and industrious and skillful, so that you may be fitted to guide and adorn a home should you be blessed with one, or to be fitted to shape your life to usefulness and independence if you never have a home of your own, and if in connection with these aims you seek to obtain and preserve good health, you will, so far as this life is concerned, "be thoroughly furnished unto all good works." You will become a noble woman, whose adorning will be not alone of the outward appearance, but of the inner life and of the soul — an adorning which, according to St. Paul, "is in the sight of God of great price."

LETTER IV.

PERSONAL HABITS.

My Dear Daughter:—The power of winning love and friends, which is such a precious possession to all young people, especially to young girls, will, in connection with good behavior and good manners, depend very largely upon certain personal habits, chief among which are order, neatness, promptness, and cheerfulness.

The girl or woman who is personally disorderly and untidy in her room and dress puts a great strain upon the patience and affection of all those associated with her who are possessed of refined and cultivated tastes. In fact, I believe there is nothing so disenchanting, so contrary to ideal young womanhood, as a lack of neatness and tidiness

in person and dress. This wonderful physical organism with which we have been endowed depends for its perfection and health and attractiveness upon the care we give it. The teeth, the hair, the complexion, are all dependent for their beauty—and it is quite right that we should strive to make them beautiful—upon constant attention to those conditions which insure their health and perfection. And the most important of these conditions is cleanliness. At the present time, no young girl can hope for recognition or welcome in refined and cultivated society, upon whose teeth tartar and other discoloring deposits are allowed to accumulate; whose breath is not pure and sweet; whose hair is muggy and untidily kept; whose finger nails are neglected and dark at the edges. These things may seem trifles, but they are not, for they are the outward expression of an inward grace; all these marks really reveal

character. An untidy girl may be talented and good-tempered, but she lacks one of the most essential qualities for gaining and retaining respect and affection.

The room of any young girl is a great revealer of character in respect to real refinement and purity of taste, especially if one comes upon it somewhat unawares. Not very long since, I was called by unexpected circumstances to spend a day or two at the house of a friend, where, owing to the severe illness of two members of the family, the spare rooms were not available and I was without delay or warning shown to the private room of a young lady member of the family. It was a low attic room with a deep dormer window, and, seen unfurnished, might be regarded as unattractive in size and shape. But the impression it made as I entered and surveyed it was of refinement, beauty, repose, and

purity. The furniture was plain, but the bed was made up so beautifully, and looked so inviting in its snowy covering, that I did not notice whether the bedstead was fine or plain. The carpet and papering of the room were of light neutral tints, and the broad sloping walls which made the sides of the dormer window were ornamented, the one with a long branch of dogwood blossoms, the other with graceful groupings of poppies and swamp grass, painted thereon by the occupant of the room herself. A wicker rocking-chair had a cushion of bright-colored satine firmly tied in, and matching the ribbons which were drawn through the bordering interstices of the chair. A small table, another chair, a footstool, and two or three simple pictures on the walls, along with wash-stand and bureau, completed the furnishing of a room that instantly attracted and delighted the beholder. But the impression

above all others that the room gave was of perfect purity and sweetness and health ; and this was due to the beautiful tidiness and cleanliness everywhere apparent. Wash-stand and bureau were in perfect order, with their white mats, clean towels, and every accessory of a refined lady's toilet. The wide deep closet was filled with the appurtenances of a young lady's wardrobe, but was strikingly neat and attractive. Shoes and slippers were laid neatly in a certain place on the shelves ; articles of clothing that are usually difficult to dispose of in an orderly manner, all had an appropriate place, and so neatly and tidily was everything arranged that one felt sure the purity and order extended to the most secret recesses of every place in the room. There was no danger in any direction of coming upon anything that was not in keeping with the room of a refined and delicate young girl. The

drawers of bureau and wash-stand, as I happened to have opportunity to observe them, were as sweet and clean and orderly as the rest of the room. I felt better acquainted with the character of that young girl after two days occupation of her beautifully kept and appointed room than a year of ordinary acquaintance would have given me.

And while I am on the subject of an orderly and daintily kept room, let me tell you that the modern bane of order and neatness in a house is too many trivial and useless things, intended perhaps for ornament, but confusing to the eye, offensive to good taste, and more effective for catching dust than for anything else. The multiplication of cheap picture-cards, wall-pockets, brackets, and all sorts of little useless knicknacks, has helped on this confusion, till one is almost tempted to regard them as nuisances. A few of these ornamental trifles, arranged with

an eye to a certain unity of design, may do very well; but, as William Morris, the great apostle of true decorative art in England, has said, "Better pure empty space than unworthy and confusing ornament." You may have heard it related of the great naturalist, Thoreau, that he made a collection of stones during his rambles, and placed them on his writing-table; but when he found he had to dust them every day, he threw them away.

This same general principle applies to dress. Too many little trivial ornaments will destroy the character and dignity of any costume. Better one or two ornaments of good quality, or better none at all, than half a dozen of poor quality. And in regard to a young girl's wardrobe, the same fundamental rule prevails: if every article of apparel is not daintily clean, it is unbecoming and unworthy a refined personality. Soiled laces and soiled

ribbons are to be shunned ; but better untidiness and soil of the outward apparel than of that which we know by the general name of underwear, which is far more personal and important than the outward costume. The more refined the character and taste of any young girl, the more particular will she be in the matter of all articles of apparel that are private to herself, that they shall at least be daintily neat and clean. I need not say to you how disenchanting it is to see a young lady's foot with a shoe half buttoned because half the buttons are gone ; or to see a slipper slip off and disclose neglected and untidy hose. No young girl of proper self-respect or refinement will ever tolerate any such blemishes in her wardrobe.

Next in importance to habits of order and personal neatness comes the habit of promptness. The girl who loiters and dawdles and keeps people waiting, who is behindhand with her work as

well as in keeping her appointments, who is never ready at meal-time, but who is always ready with some excuse for such annoying conduct, is a household nuisance, a really painful trial to all who are brought into intimate relations with her. How often have I wished it were possible to arouse the consciousness of daughters in comfortable homes to the pain and inconvenience they give their parents and friends by a habitual lack of promptness! For my own part, I remember how my conscience was first aroused, in my youth, on this point. I was reading a book written for young girls by Jane Taylor—a writer I wish were in print now—when I came across this instruction: "When you hear the bell ring for meals, rise immediately, leave whatever you are doing, and at once go to the table." Just as I was reading this sentence the bell rang, and I immediately obeyed the summons. I

noticed that my mother needed my help in seating the younger children at the table and attending to their wants, and I gave her my assistance. Somehow the meal seemed to pass off more pleasantly than usual, and I felt my conscience prick me that I had so often given my mother trouble by loitering and delaying at meal-time. I resolved that henceforth I would be promptly on hand to help her. From that time there was a marked change for the better in the ease with which our family meals were served, and all because I was always promptly on hand to help my mother. I do not know that she or any of the family knew or noticed the reason, but I was very well aware of it. It was really a kind of turning-point in my habits of life and usefulness at home. To this day I never hear a bell ring for meals, without the injunction of Jane Taylor coming into my mind: "Rise immediately,

leave whatever you are doing, and go at once to the table." I can assure you, my child, it would add greatly to the comfort and happiness of many houses, and greatly relieve many an overtaxed mother, if this good old-fashioned direction were heeded not only by daughters but by other members of the family also.

And if now, in addition to these good habits, you cultivate the habit of cheerfulness, and earnestly guard against temptation to fretfulness, moroseness, or impatience, you will be well started on the way towards a useful and lovely womanhood. A good daughter in a home is a well-spring of joy, an ever-fresh source of delight and consolation to her parents. Especially is she the stay and support and strength of her mother, the happiness of whose life depends so largely upon the respectful and affectionate conduct and attentions of her children.

LETTER V.

SOCIETY — CONVERSATION.

My Dear Daughter:—To give and receive pleasure in those pleasant assemblages and meetings of acquaintances and friends known by the general name of society, is one of the worthy minor aims of life. It is one of the marks of an advancing state of intelligence and culture, when an assemblage of gentlemen and ladies can pass delightful hours in the mere interchange of thought in conversation. And while games and other amusements may serve for a temporary variety (always excepting games known as "kissing-games," which should be promptly tabooed and denounced, and ever will be in truly refined society), yet animated and intelligent conversa-

tion must always hold the first place in the list of the pleasures of any refined society circle

How shall a young girl fit herself to enjoy and to afford enjoyment in general society? Certainly the first requisites are intelligence, a good knowledge of standard literature, a general knowledge of the more important events that are taking place in the world, and such a knowledge of the best current literature as may be obtained from the regular reading of one or two of the standard monthly magazines.

And here it may help you if I particularize a little in regard to a knowledge of important events of the day and also of general and current literature. Of course the main source of knowledge of the more important events that are going on in the world is the daily or weekly newspaper; and yet there is scarcely any reading so utterly demoralizing to good mental habits as the

ordinary daily paper. More than three-fourths of the matter printed in the "great city dailies" is not only of no use to anyone, but it is a positive damage to habits of mental application to read it. It is a waste of time even to undertake to sift the important from the unimportant. The most that any earnest person should attempt to do with a daily paper is to glance over the headlines which give the gist of the news, and then to read such editorial comments as enable the reader to understand the more important events and affairs that are transpiring in the world so that reference to them in conversation would be intelligent and intelligible. But if one should never see a daily paper, yet should every week carefully read a digest of news prepared for a good weekly paper, one would be thoroughly furnished with all necessary knowledge of contemporaneous events, and the time thus saved

from daily papers could be profitably employed in other reading.

The field of literature is now so vast that no one can hope to be well acquainted with more than a small portion of it. Yet every well-informed young person should know the general character of the principal writers since the time of Shakespere, even though one should never read their works. You may remember how, in Mr. Howell's novel of "The Rise of Silas Lapham," the novelist, with a few sentences, shows how ridiculous a really beautiful and amiable girl with a high-school education may make herself in conversation by her lack of knowledge of standard literature. She was telling a young gentleman where the book-shelves were to be in the splendid new house being built by her father, and suggesting that the shelves would look nice if the books had nice bindings.

"'Of course, I presume,' said Irene, thoughtfully, 'we shall have to have Gibbon.'

"'If you want to read him,' said Corey, with a laugh of sympathy for an imaginable joke.

"'We had a good deal about him in school. I believe we had one of his books Mine's lost, but Pen will remember.'

"The young man looked at her, and then said seriously, 'You 'll want Green, of course, and Motley, and Parkman.'

"'Yes. What kind of writers are they?'

"'They 're historians, too.'

"'Oh, yes; I remember now. That 's what Gibbon was. Is it Gibbon or Gibbons?'

"The young man decided the point with apparently superfluous delicacy. 'Gibbon, I think.'

"'There used to be so many of them,' said Irene, gaily. 'I used to get them mixed up with each other, and I couldn't tell them from the poets. Should you want to have poetry?'

"'Yes. I suppose some edition of the English poets.'

"'We don't any of us like poetry. Do you like it?'

"'I 'm afraid I don't, very much,' Corey owned. 'But of course there was a time when Tennyson was a great deal more to me than he is now.'

"'We had something about him at school, too. I think I remember the name. I think we ought to have all the American poets.'

"'Well, not all. Five or six of the best; you want Longfellow, and Bryant, and Whittier, and Emerson, and Lowell.'

"'And Shakespere,' she added. 'Don't you like Shakespere's plays? . . . We had ever so much about Shakespere. Were n't you perfectly astonished when you found out how many other plays there were of his? I always thought there was nothing but "Hamlet," and "Romeo and Juliet," and "Macbeth," and "Richard III.," and "King Lear," and that one that Robson and Crane have — oh, yes, "Comedy of Errors!"'"

So you see how ridiculous this young girl, by the betrayal of such ignorance,

made herself in conversation with a cultured young gentleman whose good opinion she was most anxious to win. And yet, to talk too much about books is not well ; it often marks the pedantic and egotistic character. It is safe to say that unless one happens to meet a very congenial mind among conversers in general society, to introduce the subject of books is liable to be misconstrued. It is not very long since another popular modern novelist held up to scorn and ridicule the young woman whose particular ambition seemed to be to let society know what an immense number of books she had been reading. Nevertheless, one must have a good groundwork of knowledge of books in order to avoid mistakes such as poor Irene made in talking with young Corey.

Directions and suggestions for aiding young people to become agreeable and pleasant conversers must necessarily be

mainly negative. Taken for granted that a young person possesses animation, good sense, intelligence, and a genuine interest in her companions and the world around her; is observing, and can speak grammatically without hesitating; knows the difference between "you and I" and "you and me" (which I am sorry to say a great many young girls of my acquaintance do not, for I constantly hear them saying, "He brought you and I a bouquet," or, "You and me are invited to tea this evening"), she can almost certainly be a pleasant and entertaining converser if she avoids certain things, as, for instance:

1. She must avoid talking about herself, her exploits, her acquirements, her entertainments, her beaux, etc. Especially should she avoid seeking to make an impression by frequent mention of advantageous friends or circumstances. The greatest observer and

commentator upon manners that ever wrote was Mr. Emerson. In one of his essays he says: "You shall not enumerate your brilliant acquaintances, nor tell me by their titles what books you have read. I am to infer that you keep good company by your good manners and better information; and to infer your reading from the wealth and accuracy of your conversation."

2. She must avoid a loud tone of voice, and also avoid laughing too much and too easily. To laugh aloud is a dangerous thing, unless all noise and harshness have been cultivated out of the voice, as ought to be done in every good school. The culture of the voice is one of the most important elements in making a pleasant converser. American girls and women are accused by cultivated foreigners of having loud, harsh, strident voices; and there is too much truth in the accusation. Nor is there any excuse for unpleasant, harsh,

rough, nasal tones of voice in these days when in every good school instruction is given in the management of the voice for reading and conversation. The cause of harshness and loudness is often mere carelessness on the part of young people. But talking in too loud a tone is scarcely less unpleasant to the listeners than the use of too low a tone, which is generally an affectation.

3. She must avoid frequent attempts at wit; avoid punning, which is the cheapest possible form of wit; and avoid sarcasm. The talent for being sarcastic is a most dangerous one. No one ever knew a sarcastic woman who could keep friends. The temptation to be bright and interesting and to attract attention by the use of sarcasm is very strong, for nearly all will be interested in it and enjoy it for a little. But were I obliged to choose between sarcasm and dullness in a young girl, I should

prefer dullness. Happily, this is not a necessary alternative.

4. She must avoid a kind of joking and badinage that should never be heard among well-bred young people in society—that about courtship and marriage. Much harm, much blunting of fine sensibilities, much destruction of that delicate modesty which is the priceless dower of young girlhood, comes of such jesting and joking where it is permitted without restraint or reproof. A young girl may not be called upon to reprove it, but she certainly can shun the company of those who are given to such vulgarity (for no other term will rightly describe it), and she can certainly refrain from joining in any conversation of this description.

Always remember that to be a good converser you must be a good listener. Very often people acquire a pleasant reputation and popularity in society by the exercise of this talent alone—that

of listening with attention and interest to what other people say. Be especially careful to avoid interrupting one who is speaking. Many a fine and noble thought, many an interesting discussion, is broken off and lost by the irrelevant interruption of some thoughtless person. One reason why the art of conversation has so degenerated in these days is that so few have a real interest in hearing the fine thoughts of good thinker and talkers. So many people want to talk about themselves, or their affairs, that it is in many circles almost an impossibility to maintain a high and elevating conversation. Until years and experience, as well as wide reading and information, have given you the right to express freely your opinions in society, it will be well to listen a great deal more than you speak, especially when in the company of your elders. Avoid all sentimentality, or the discussion of subjects that would expose the private and sacred feelings

of the heart. Do not quote poetry; do not ask people's opinions on delicate and individual questions. I have heard a young boarding-school graduate embarrass a whole room-full of excellent and educated people by asking a young gentleman if he did not think Longfellow very inferior to Lowell in his love poems. Among those of your own age let what you have to say relate to everything more than to the doings or sayings of other people. In this way you will avoid that bane of social conversation—gossip. In all social relations, strive to throw your influence for that which is faithful, sincere, kind, generous, and just. Have a special thought and regard for those who may labor under disadvantages; be especially kind to the shrinking and timid, to the poor and unfortunate. Strive to be worthy of the confidence and respect and love of your associates, and all your relations to society will be easily and naturally and happily adjusted.

LETTER VI.

ASSOCIATES AND FRIENDS.

My Dear Daughter: —When I was a young girl, I well remember that my parents judged who were and who were not desirable and proper associates for their children, chiefly by reference to the parents and family of our young companions. It was taken for granted that the children of good, honorable, Christian people, who strove to train their children to obedience and a conscientious life, would be suitable companions for us; and this criterion in nearly every instance proved to be a true one. In only one instance, indeed, did it fail; and I well remember the shock it gave a whole circle of young people, when a young companion, the son of an eminent clergyman, was sent home

on account of his language and conduct after one week's visit among friends, when it had been expected by all that he would stay two or three months.

But in these days this criterion of family and parentage is insufficient; for, sad as it may seem, the children of really excellent parents are often so derelict in duty, so lacking in conscientiousness, so idle and aimless and frivolous, that their companionship should be dreaded for susceptible young people, especially for young girls. One thing is very certain: that in these days young people, when out of sight of their parents, often act and talk in a way which they certainly would not do in their parents' presence. And that is truly a distressing fear which often comes to the hearts of excellent and faithful parents, that the conduct of their children when out of their sight and restraint may be totally at vari-

ance with all they have been taught in regard to right and proper conduct.

Now all people, old or young, are influenced in conduct somewhat by their associates and friends; but young people especially are susceptible to the influence of example. And it is a painful but well known fact that young people are much more easily and quickly influenced by bad example than by good. One frivolous, vain, forward, pert young girl, coming for a season into association with a company of young people, may in a few short weeks make her impress on the manners and conversation of the whole of them. Her slang expressions will be adopted; her loud manners and eccentricities of dress will be imitated; her frivolity and dislike for any of the serious duties of life will prove contagious.

For you, and for any young girl, I would consider dangerous and harmful intimate association with:

1. The young girl who, either from circumstances or natural disposition, does not compel herself, or is not compelled, to do something — to study her lessons and take some useful share in every-day duties. "Nothing to do is worse than nothing to eat," said a great man, Thomas Carlyle ; and observing parents or teachers know this to be especially true of young people. It makes no difference that they don't want to do anything or to exert themselves. The very absence of exertion makes them weak and indisposed to effort. It is a lamentable lack at the present time among a large proportion of the daughters of comfortable and refined homes, that they have small physical strength and no qualities of endurance at all. They are "all tired out" if they sweep and dust or do housework for an hour or two, or take a half-mile walk on an errand, or sew continuously for an hour. Very likely they will want to

lie down and rest an hour after such exertion. This is all the result of unexercised muscles and mental indolence. That mother was quite right, who, when her boarding-school daughter complained that it made her arms ache to sweep, replied: "Well, you must sweep till it doesn't make them ache." Mind and body both grow strong through exercise. Unexercised muscles, of course, will be weak and flabby and tire easily. But the young girl whom it tires to work is most likely on the *qui vive* about some folly or other nearly all the time. Lack of healthful mental and bodily occupation and stimulus will almost certainly produce a craving for unhealthy excitement. Such a girl is apt to be constantly planning for mere pleasure and to have "a good time." And, oh! what an unsatisfying, unworthy aim in life is this, and how pernicious in its effects! Pleasure and "a good time"

are all very well, but unless they are partaken of sparingly they produce a mental effect similar to that which the constant use of desserts and sweetmeats, instead of plain substantial food, would produce in the physical system. Association with the idle and the mere pleasure-seeker is therefore to be guarded against, for their influence cannot but be harmful.

2. Although perfection is not to be expected in any companion or associate, yet there are certain defects of character which are so grave that parents cannot afford to encourage their children in associating with those who exhibit these in a marked degree. Untruthfulness; the habit of gossiping about friends or acquaintances or divulging family privacies; sullenness and moroseness under reproof; rebellious and disrespectful expressions and conduct toward parents and teachers; indifference to the good opinion of sensible

people, as shown by unusual and startling conduct in public places ; all such things mark the undesirable associate for young girls. But there are young girls against whom none of these complaints could be made, who are undesirable companions because they are wholly absorbed in love of dress and display and desire to be admired and noticed. It is generally among this class that we find young girls who prefer, to an altogether unreasonable and unbecoming extent, the society of young men to the society of their own sex. It is among these that we find the young lady who does not know how to prevent undue familiarity in the conduct of young men ; who will tolerate, without disapprobation or protest, rude conduct on the part of young men. This over-eagerness for their society, and easy toleration of too familiar conduct and conversation, young men, who are quick discerners in such

matters, are very apt to take advantage of. Only the best and most high-principled among them will refrain from doing so.

I have spoken of the influence that a frivolous, vain, selfish companion will be sure to exercise over those with whom she is intimately associated. For you, as for any young girl, I would seek to prevent such associations. On the other hand, I should rejoice to see you form friendships with good, high-minded, intelligent, gentle-mannered girls of your own age, and should hope that you would mutually emulate and stimulate each other in all worthy aims and ambitions. Such friendships, however, are seldom hastily formed. The gushing and violent attachments that sometimes spring up between young girls are sure to be of mushroom growth and duration, unless there is genuine character and merit in both. During the period of the continuance

of such friendships, a great deal of "selfishness for two" is often developed and manifested. Very often when young people are visiting together their attentions to each other seem to make them forget their duties and the attentions due to other people. Here is one of the best tests of the true character of a young girl: her conduct in the house where she is a visitor. If she is truly well-mannered and kind-hearted she will certainly be on her guard to conform to the hours and habits of the household where she is a guest; she will avoid making any demands upon the time of her friend that would cause that friend to neglect her daily duties or put to inconvenience the other members of the family. She will divide her attentions with all the members of the family, having special regard for the very young or the very old. She will, above all things, be prompt and punctual at meal-time. Her own tact and

on account of his language and conduct after one week's visit among friends, when it had been expected by all that he would stay two or three months.

But in these days this criterion of family and parentage is insufficient; for, sad as it may seem, the children of really excellent parents are often so derelict in duty, so lacking in conscientiousness, so idle and aimless and frivolous, that their companionship should be dreaded for susceptible young people, especially for young girls. One thing is very certain: that in these days young people, when out of sight of their parents, often act and talk in a way which they certainly would not do in their parents' presence. And that is truly a distressing fear which often comes to the hearts of excellent and faithful parents, that the conduct of their children when out of their sight and restraint may be totally at vari-

ance with all they have been taught in regard to right and proper conduct.

Now all people, old or young, are influenced in conduct somewhat by their associates and friends; but young people especially are susceptible to the influence of example. And it is a painful but well known fact that young people are much more easily and quickly influenced by bad example than by good. One frivolous, vain, forward, pert young girl, coming for a season into association with a company of young people, may in a few short weeks make her impress on the manners and conversation of the whole of them. Her slang expressions will be adopted; her loud manners and eccentricities of dress will be imitated; her frivolity and dislike for any of the serious duties of life will prove contagious.

For you, and for any young girl, I would consider dangerous and harmful intimate association with:

"She doeth little kindnesses
Which most leave undone or despise;
For naught that sets our heart at ease,
And giveth happiness or peace,
Is low esteemed in her eyes.

"She hath no scorn of common things,
And, though she seem of other birth,
Round us her heart entwines and clings
And patiently she folds her wings
To tread the humble paths of earth.

"Blessing she is; God made her so,
And deeds of week-day holiness
Fall from her noiseless as the snow,
Nor hath she ever chanced to know
That aught were easier than to bless.

"She is most fair, and thereunto
Her life doth brightly harmonize;
Feeling or thought that was not true
Ne'er made less beautiful the blue
Unclouded heaven of her eyes."

LETTER VII.

TACT — UNOBTRUSIVENESS.

My Dear Daughter:—In one of my letters to you, I said that there were certain excellent manuals which contained important general and special directions concerning the forms and manners or etiquette of polite society, and that all young people should study and profit by some standard works of this kind. But there are a great many things pertaining to the conduct of life, that go to make up character and affect the impression we make upon those around us, which are not set down in books and cannot be imparted by set forms and rules. For instance, one of the most desirable possessions for any person, young or old, is tact—a power of moving on through life without con-

stantly coming into collision with people and things and opinions. And yet no rules were ever laid down by which anyone can learn to acquire tact. It is rather the natural result of a disposition to make people with whom we are associated comfortable and happy, since in order to do this we must constantly guard against arousing antagonisms or wounding the susceptibilities of those around us.

Now, to illustrate by some instances of lack of tact: A lady guest at a table where broiled ham was the meat provided, declined to take any, and then added, "I don't think pork is fit food for any human stomach." Of course an embarrassment fell upon host and hostess and all the company, and the rest of the meal-time was passed in an ineffectual endeavor to restore conversation to a harmonious basis. What caused this lady to make such a remark? Simply lack of tact, which

means that she had not the fine sensitiveness that would prevent her from wounding the feelings of her friends. She had no delicacy of perception as to the reflection she cast upon her host and hostess by so brusquely condemning something to which they were habituated. This is one instance of lack of tact, but here is another of different character: A company of educated people sat down at table together, and the conversation happened to turn on the question of the authorship of Shakespeare's plays. One lady, who was a recent college graduate and supposed to be possessed of an unusual degree of culture, said in a most positive manner: "I think the advocates of the theory that some one other than Shakespeare wrote the plays attributed to him, simply show their ignorance and shallowness." An uncomfortable pause fell upon the company, for two of the best informed people present were

entirely convinced that some one other than Shakespeare wrote the plays. It was simply lack of tact that betrayed this lady into a positiveness and obtrusiveness of statement that made others uncomfortable and aroused their antagonism. Here is still another instance: One lady was introduced to another lady who was the wife of a gentleman much older than herself. After catching the name the lady said: "Are you the wife of old Mr. C—?" Of course everybody around who had any sensibility was pained and embarrassed by such a blunt, brusque question. Yet the lady who displayed this want of tact was a college graduate and the principal teacher in an important school.

Now, no rule or rules will ever prevent anyone from doing and saying things which show lack of tact. Nothing will do it but the cultivation of a spirit of sympathy which will enable

one to realize how other people feel when their opinions and peculiarities or circumstances are so bluntly antagonized or alluded to. I know an excellent and high-minded lady, of superior intellectual culture, who often complains that she has few friends. She says that she longs for the affection and esteem of her friends, yet, as she expresses it, she has "no personal magnetism." I was once present in a literary society of which this lady, Mrs. A., was a member. Another member, Mrs. B., made a statement about a matter under discussion in the society, when Mrs. A. arose and said, bluntly: "That is not true." Everybody was astonished, and listened almost indignantly while Mrs. A. went on to show that Mrs. B. had simply been misinformed and was mistaken. It would have been entirely easy and proper for Mrs. A. to ask permission to correct a misapprehension on the part

of Mrs. B., and she could have done it in such a way as would have wounded nobody's feelings. Mrs. A., while she complains that she has few friends, frequently asserts that she believes in saying just what she thinks. This is all well enough, but she says it with so little tact as to constantly wound the feelings and antagonize the opinions of everyone around her.

Tact is as important in manners as in speech. The word is closely allied to the word *touch*, and a person who has good tact is really one who can touch people gently, carefully, kindly, in all the relations of life. In the animal creation no creature has more perfect tact than a well-bred kindly-treated household cat. You may have seen one of these enter a room where perhaps a circle of people were seated around a stove or open fire. Puss wants her warm place in front of the fire or stove, but she does not brusquely and rudely

push her way there. No. She glides gently, purringly around the circle, rubs caressingly against this one and that, as though gently saying, "By your leave"; and when finally she reaches the desired spot, she lays herself down so gracefully and quietly and curls herself up so deftly that to witness the act really affords pleasure to the observer. A creature of less tact and grace would only appear obtrusive and offend and antagonize the company, and probably rightfully receive reproof and be ejected from the room.

And so I would wish to see you and all young people cultivate tact; study how to speak and act so as to touch gently all with whom you are associated. Behind the best tact lies the wish to be kind and to make people comfortable and happy, to avoid wounding and irritating; and so it is true that the basis of true tact is, after all, the moral sentiment.

The young person who would cultivate tact in speech and manners will carefully guard against obtrusiveness. This is a defect in the manners of so many people, both young and old, and includes such a multitude of things, that it is worth while to particularize a little upon it. Quietness, repose, order, are distinguishing marks of cultivated social life everywhere, and to people who are habituated to these conditions of life it is painful to have incongruous or inappropriate acts or sounds thrust upon their attention. Here is a generalization that explains the reason why many things, harmless in themselves, are unpleasant to and offend the taste of cultivated people. No really cultivated young girl will, for instance, open and play upon a piano in a hotel parlor or any other parlor at inappropriate times or when it is occupied by strangers. She will never perform in public any of the duties of the toilet,

such as cleaning her nails or using a tooth-pick. She will not eat peanuts or fruit or candy, or chew gum, in public places. In fact, I cannot imagine a really refined young lady chewing gum even in the privacy of her own room, so offensive is it to good taste. She will not descant upon bodily ailments in the drawing-room or at the table. She will not rush noisily up and down stairs or through the house, clashing doors and startling everyone with unpleasant noises. She will not interrupt people who are conversing, to ask an irrelevant question or one pertaining to her own affairs. She will not slap an acquaintance familiarly on the shoulder, or make special displays of affection or intimacy before people. She will if possible suppress the sudden sneeze, and use every effort to quiet a cough. She will not go uninvited into the private room of anyone, nor into the kitchen of her hostess where she is a

visitor. All such things really inflict pain upon sensitive people ; they offend because they obtrude; and all similar actions and obtrusiveness are to be carefully avoided by everyone who desires to acquire a true and genuine culture of action, speech, and manners. It is well worth your while to think earnestly and often upon these things; to learn to understand why so many thoughtless actions on the part of young people are set down to a general lack of cultivation. All such obtrusiveness must be done away with before we shall be able to realize the prayer of David, "that our daughters may be like corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace."

LETTER VIII.

WHO ARE THE CULTIVATED?

My Dear Daughter:—No words in the English language are so much bandied about in efforts to describe or classify society at the present day as are the words "culture," "cultured," "cultivated," and their antitheses. These are the terms that intimidate the vain, selfish, illiterate rich; for to be described as "rich but uncultivated" is regarded as a greater slur upon the social standing of families than to be reported as having gained wealth by dishonesty or trickery. And then the matter is made all the harder for those willing to acquire a hypocritical polish at any expense if they can only be called "cultivated," from the fact that they do not know what true culture is,

nor are they able to recognize it when they see it. They are like a person lacking in all artistic sense, who wishes to buy pictures—at the mercy of every impostor.

What, then, is the secret that lies behind the demeanor and manners of the cultivated man or woman, or the cultivated family? What power or what sentiment modulates the voice to kind and gentle tones; restrains the boisterous conversation or laughter; gives such a delicate perception of the rights of others as to make impossible the dictatorial or arrogant form of address, the impertinent question, the personal familiarity, the curiosity about private affairs, the forwardness in giving advice or expressing unasked opinions, the boastful statement of personal possessions or qualities, the action that causes pain or inconvenience or discomfort to associates or dependents, all of

which are the most common forms of transgression among the uncultivated?

In his famous address on "The Progress of Culture," delivered before a celebrated college society in Cambridge in 1867, Emerson summed up the whole matter in one sentence: "The foundation of culture, as of character, is at last the moral sentiment." Here is the whole secret in a single sentence. The restraining grace is "at last the moral sentiment." It is a fine genuine unselfishness that, observing how all these things may pain and wound, refrains from doing any of them. The man or woman or family who can avoid transgressing in these particulars can do so habitually only as the result of a fine moral sentiment underlying the whole nature. And those who possess or have cultivated in themselves this fine moral sentiment of unselfishness, justice, and considerateness, will be surrounded by an atmosphere of cul-

ture though their dwelling-place be an uncarpeted cabin, while those who lack this restraining grace will be "uncultivated," though their surroundings afford every comfort, beauty, and luxury. It should be a thought of encouragement to us, and an inspiration of hope that we may possess the true and imperishable riches of a cultivated spirit, however poor and struggling our lives may be, or however barren of external beauty our surroundings. Culture depends not on material possessions. In fact, the very abundance of conveniences and comforts and elegances often seems to have an injurious and deteriorating effect on individuals and families by producing in them a selfish love of personal ease and exclusiveness. On the other hand, the painful and patient economizing of humble toilers often produces an unselfishness and patience and gentleness of demean-

or which is in effect the very finest culture.

In these days of specialists and artists and architects and upholsterers, anyone who has money can possess himself of the material surroundings of taste and culture. His house may be "a poem in stone" exteriorly, and a "symphony in color" in its interior adornments. This much of the products of genuine culture he may buy with money. But no money can buy the pearl of great price, the cultured spirit in the individual or family, without which the most palatial mansion is but a dead and lifeless shell. Lacking this moral sentiment and culture, how many a handsomely appointed home is the abode of rudeness, unkindness, selfishness, and misery! The rude speech or cutting retort or selfish act are doubly and trebly incongruous when pictured walls and frescoed ceilings and luxurious surroundings of artistic beauty are the

silent witnesses of the vulgarity. On the other hand, there is opportunity for the display of the best and kindest and most cultivated manners in the humble home where lack of suitable furnishings and dearth of conveniences puts everyone's unselfishness to the test.

I have frequently heard wise parents and teachers speak of the perplexity of spirit which they feel when they see that in so many instances the acquirement of accomplishments, as they are termed, fails to add any moral strength or beauty to the character of the young people in whose welfare and advancement their hearts are so entirely absorbed. This young girl sings and plays beautifully, paints and draws in a genuinely artistic manner, speaks French and German like a native, and yet she is ill-tempered and shrewish if circumstances happen to cross her inclination. Here is a young man who is possessed of a fine collegiate education,

and who is also an excellent musician. Yet he can be rude and disrespectful to his mother, insolent to his father, overbearing and arrogant towards servants and subordinates, and a perfect boor to his younger brothers and sisters. Both these young persons have uncultivated spirits. So we see that the cultivation of the intellectual nature, the acquirement of accomplishments, the practice of any art, the advantages of travel, the surroundings of elegance, may or may not tend to the genuine culture of the spirit; and as wise and earnest parents and teachers perceive this truth, they realize more and more that the great problem of culture, alike for parent and teacher, is how to develop the moral sentiment.

LETTER IX.

RELIGIOUS CULTURE AND DUTY.

My Dear Daughter:—I have endeavored in my previous letters to give you a kind of outline series of directions and instructions in matters that pertain to the ordinary every day duties of life. I have spoken of the motives that should influence your actions, and have tried to show you that all truly lovely and beautiful conduct must have a basis in the moral sentiment. I have reserved till this last letter what I have to say to you on the most important subject of all: the infinitely momentous subject of religious culture and duty.

In the first place I must explain that there is a great difference between the methods and circumstances of religious instruction now and those which

surrounded the youth of the maturer generation. When people of the age of your parents were young, the habits of family life were such that religious observances held a place of first importance. All household affairs were arranged with reference to morning and evening worship, which consisted of singing, reading the Bible, and prayer. No matter how much work was to be done, the family must rise in time to allow for the performance of this service. Children heard so much about God, and heaven, and the life beyond death, that often a morbid and unnatural frame of mind was induced. Parents and instructors often forgot to make allowance for the fact that youth naturally and rightly loves and enjoys this life, and rightly and naturally dreads death. So much was said about the other world that it seemed almost a sin to think about or plan much for this. God and heaven were

imagined as close above in the sky; the judgment day was ever held threateningly before us; and pictures of a literal lake of fire and brimstone, into which wicked people would be cast, were painted for the imagination of children, till, as the experience of hundreds testifies, even the most conscientious of them feared to close their eyes in sleep at night lest they should awake in that terrible place of torment.

From this doubtless too severe and harsh religious regime, a reaction has taken place which has thrown the customs of family life and the religious education of the young people of to-day far into the opposite extreme. The hurry and railroad rush of modern social and commercial life have shortened or even cut off entirely the hours for family worship. In the modern effort to emphasize the fact that God is love, the other fact that sin deserves and receives punishment has been

thrown too far into the background, or is ignored altogether. Regular reading of the Bible has become as rare as it formerly was universal. Irreverence and skepticism in regard to its truths and teachings permeate a large portion of society, and the general influence of the social life of young people is opposed to the cultivation or expression of the religious spirit or aspiration. All this involves the loss of a most valuable mental and spiritual discipline, and earnest parents of to-day are at a loss how to supply it.

I will press upon your attention only one argument for the culture of a religious spirit, and that is the argument of experience. What is the universal testimony of those whose lives are really governed by the fear and love of a divine Creator? It is that in the consciousness of a desire to obey God and live in harmony with His laws they find their highest happiness.

To everyone who lives beyond the earliest period of childhood, comes at some time or other sorrow, disappointment, sickness, loss, bereavement. The great fact of death looms up at the end of every pathway, however bright and happy. The universal testimony of the human race, from the earliest records of human experience to the present time, is that only faith and hope in a beneficent God ruling over all events can sustain and comfort the human heart through all the changes and vicissitudes of life, and reconcile to the thought of death.

Early youth is naturally happy, gay, care-free, and indifferent to sorrows and fears of which it knows nothing. But there comes a time to every sensible and earnest young heart when it realizes the transitoriness of all earthly things, and longs for something on which the heart can take hold and rest. I do not believe any young person fails

of this experience sooner or later. It is a hunger of the heart which nothing but the love of God can fill; and if, when it is first felt, the heart only humbly and earnestly turns to God with high and firm resolve to seek a knowledge of Him and His laws, to bring all actions and plans of life into harmony with His revealed will, the foundation of an enduring happiness is laid for this life, and doubtless for the life to come.

But this desire and effort after a knowledge of God and obedience to His will do not come without a struggle. We are strange and mysterious creatures, having within us a nature that is most susceptible to temptations, to do evil. Every one of us is conscious of a struggle constantly going on in our hearts and lives between evil and good. The temptations to selfishness, greed, unkindness, untruthfulness, irreverence, indolence, are constant and severe

until we have by long conflict and repeated victory habituated our hearts to choosing the right. Yet every victory over self and temptation helps us toward that spiritual attainment which will in time enable us to say, with the sweet psalmist of Israel: "The Lord is the portion of my soul; the Lord is the strength of my heart; the Lord is my light and my salvation."

Most usually the heart first turns toward God with deep earnestness through sorrow. There are many griefs and burdens of life which cannot be alleviated or lightened in any way except by spiritual comfort and help. And this spiritual comfort and help are among the deepest realities of life. There is a strength, a happiness, a peace and a support in sorrow which the world can neither give nor take away. How priceless a blessing to possess! The saddest, darkest, most suffering life can be irradiated and

uplifted and enriched by this spiritual blessing. The most fortunately circumstanced life may be made poor by its absence. Dean Stanley tells us of a sister who for perhaps forty years was a constant sufferer from spinal disease, and during that period almost constantly confined to her couch. Yet her countenance was irradiated with cheerfulness, and she seemed to inspire everyone who came near her with comfort, and with ardor and enthusiasm for goodness. Such examples are not rare. Every community knows some person or persons sustained in deep affliction, though long continued trial and sorrow and loss, by this unseen spiritual power. On the other hand, experience and observation show us constantly recurring examples of discontent, peevishness, unhappiness, on the part of those who appear to be specially favored in the possession of the comforts and riches of this life.

Lord Chesterfield said that, having seen and experienced all the pomps and pleasures of life, he was disgusted with and hated them all, and only desired, like a weary traveler, to be allowed "to sleep in the carriage" until the end came. But Paul the apostle, contemplating the close of his eventful life of sorrow and suffering, said: "I have fought the good fight; I have finished the course; I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness."

So it seems only a reasonable appeal to every young heart, as soon as it is mature enough to understand and make choice among the realities and verities of life, to choose this better part; to keep the heart receptive to and expectant of this divine comfort and help; to seek to know and obey the will of this God of all consolation. But this choice is a purely individual matter. No one can make another person good any more

than he can make him happy. All that anyone, all that the wisest and best teachers and parents can do, is to present the arguments for and urge the choice of the better part.

But if it is chosen, or if there is a desire to be enabled to choose it, what a help and stimulus comes from the reading and study of the Bible, especially of the Psalms and the New Testament! Therein are recorded every phase of the spiritual experiences of humanity in its aspiration after a knowledge of God. Therein are recorded the words and precepts of "the Great Teacher sent from God," who said that he and the Father were one, and that he was sent of God to seek and save the lost. Here are the records of the compassionate expressions that fell from his lips as he proclaimed his message as the Son of God. Whatever other opinion men may have of Christ, all must confess that in his

words to and about sinning and sorrowing and suffering men and women, he displayed a love and sympathy such as earth had never known before, and such as it has known since, in kind, only in the devoted followers of Christ. To have the memory stored with these expressions or teachings, or with the prayers and aspirations of the psalms and the prophecies, is to have a fountain of comfort and consolation for the heart, that passes all understanding. But this fact of human experience you must accept on the testimony of those who have experienced it, until you have experienced it for yourself.

And thus, my daughter, while I wish for you the possession of all the graces and adornments of person and character that pertain to and are possible for the life that now is, how infinitely more do I desire for you that you may know God and the comforts and consolations of His word and spirit. To know that you had sought and found

for yourself this knowledge, that you knew and sought the help of the divine spirit in resisting temptation to do wrong, that in disappointment your heart would turn to God for comfort, that in sorrow you would seek consolation in communion with God, would be to feel that your future happiness was absolutely assured. In this seeking after God, all things would be yours. And even though you had made but a small and weak beginning to "follow on to know the Lord," I should rejoice in the assurance that the good work, having been begun would be completed unto the end. And so I close these letters with the same summing up of all advice, all instruction, which more than four thousand years ago a prophet of God gave to his reflections upon the vicissitudes of human life: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man."

ESSENTIALS OF CULTURE.

A TALK WITH SCHOOL GIRLS.

There is no more lovely or beautiful sight on earth than a well educated and truly cultivated young girl or woman. She can almost always be recognized at the first glance, for true culture — culture that includes the heart as well as the intellect, that elevates and gives self-poise and dignity to the whole nature, always leaves its impress upon face and manner. Repose is one of its essential characteristics; unobtrusiveness is another. The truly cultivated young woman never attracts attention to herself by any striking quality of dress or voice, except as attention may be attracted by quiet beauty and appropriateness of dress and demeanor.

That nature is still in a rude, unrefined and uncultivated condition that enjoys attracting attention by any striking quality or peculiarity of dress, or obtrusiveness of voice or manner. This truth has been observed and especially emphasized over and over again by two great American writers—Emerson and Lowell—the one in his essays, the other in his poems descriptive of lovely girlhood. Emerson was the most acute observer of manners and behavior that culture and learning have ever produced. His very latest essays abound with fine and pithy sayings on this subject. In one of them he says: "The longer I live, the more am I impressed with the importance of manners. . . . When we reflect upon their persuasive and cheering force, how they recommend, prepare and draw people together; . . . when we think what keys they are, and to what secrets; what high and inspir-

ing tokens of character they convey and what divination is required in us for the reading of this fine telegraph, we see what range the subject has and what relations to convenience and beauty."

Dress is really a department of manners, and, as being the instrument of the first impression—agreeable or disagreeable—which we make on others, deserves careful and thoughtful consideration. The first and essential element of refined and beautiful dress is, as it is in fine manners, unobtrusiveness. No costume that, as the good Anglo-Saxon phrase expresses it, "strikes the eye," or is evidently designed too much for effect, can possess this highest and best quality of dress. Let the texture be ever so beautiful and costly, let the making and ornamentation be ever so artistic and exquisite, yet should it disclose its value and quality to the close rather than to

the casual observer. The sight of a dress overloaded with costly trimming or lace is as offensive to refined, artistic taste as is the overloading of the person or hands with jewels. The more costly the dress or the jewels the greater the modesty with which they should be worn or displayed. No queen of Europe would now wear the Kohinoor under any conceivable circumstances; and why? Because the refined and cultivated taste of to-day would pronounce the wearing of the largest and most costly diamond in the world a piece of vulgar obtrusiveness which could have no other object than to cause the multitude to stare at the wearer. It is a sign of the improving taste of the age that colors are so largely banished from the street and from church. It was the ladies of the nobility of England who first set the example of wearing on the street the absolutely plain, tailor-made costume,

the appropriateness of which refined taste so quickly recognized. Doubtless the day is near at hand when all highly ornamental dress shall be discarded for the street. Lace, floating ribbons, nodding feathers, jewelry—all are inappropriate for street costume, however suitable they may be for home or places of entertainment.

It is a great gain when a young woman or any one else can wear clothes without being conscious of them. Self-consciousness of any kind is always painful and detrimental to character and manners, but consciousness of clothes is especially annoying and destructive of repose. Here again our good sage, Emerson, helps us out with his suggestions, and makes us realize the importance of studying the causes and cure of one of the most common embarrassments of young people. He says in effect: "If one has not firm nerves and has keen sensibility, it is

perhaps a wise economy to go to a good shop and dress oneself irreproachably; one can then dismiss all care from the mind and may easily find that he possesses an addition of confidence, a fortification that turns the scale in social encounters and allows him to go gaily into conversations where else he had been dry and embarrassed." If a young woman is, for any reason, not sure of the appropriateness of her dress under any given circumstances or for any given occasion, by all means let her ask of some one competent to instruct her in the matter. A good modiste or a tasteful milliner should always be able to give such information. Better than this it is to go to some refined, discreet woman of maturity of mind and judgment, and obtain the desired instruction. Especially should young girls or women coming from country places or villages to visit friends in larger cities be careful to obtain and

profit by such advice and information. There are few hospitable residents of large cities who have not at some time or other been pained or mortified by the "outre" costume or "striking" hat of some country cousin who visits them and rejoices in the self-complacency of what she supposes to be a fine and tasteful wardrobe.

Principals of schools and colleges for young women find one of their most perplexing experiences to be the toning down and making appropriate the dress of neophytes from places distant from large cities. Often these are the daughters of families of wealth and ordinary good sense. Yet they will send their daughters to school with a wardrobe that would be more suitable for an actress in a variety theatre than for a modest, well-bred young woman, whose highest aim should be to advance in her studies.

The truly refined dress will never

admit of obtrusive display of any kind. "I am sure that she was well dressed, for I did not notice anything she had on," was the commendatory comment of a courteous and elegant man of the world, speaking of his meeting with a beautiful and cultured young woman. Of culture in the art of dress this unobtrusiveness will ever be a true test.

This much in regard to dress for the street and special occasions; but it is the dress at home and in the ordinary routine of school and every-day life that is the real revealer of character. Here neatness, tidiness and delicacy are the first essentials. There is a defect in the character of any young girl who will go around with buttonless or half buttoned shoes, with unmended rents in her dress, and uncared-for hair, teeth, and finger nails. Especially offensive to refined taste are spots or stains suggestive of lack of napkins at table or of aprons when they should be worn.

It is really painful to see a dress that has once been beautiful and of fine texture, all begrimed and repulsive with use in household work that should always command for its performance a special, neat costume of suitable material. In no costume is a young girl more attractive and lovable than in that which indicates that she is engaged in any of the household arts, but a silk dress, however old, is never appropriate or becoming for such occasions. Nothing is ever becoming that is not appropriate; and frayed and soiled trimmings and laces, and outworn dresses of originally fine material, will never be seen as the working costume of the truly refined woman.

To pass now to the consideration of other essentials of culture:

In his essay on "Behavior" Emerson says: "As respects the delicate questions of culture I do not think that any other than negative rules can be

laid down. What finest hands would not be clumsy to sketch the genial precepts of a young girl's demeanor? The chances seem infinite against success, and yet success is continually attained." By which we understand that the great sage recognized the fact that, notwithstanding the difficulty of acquiring perfect manners, and notwithstanding the infinite delicacy of the perfection possible in a young girl's demeanor, he saw and observed many who had attained it. This is an encouragement and an incentive to study and define some of the principles that go to make up perfect demeanor in a young girl or woman.

Emerson was quite right in saying that, in general, only negative rules can be laid down. To refrain from unpleasant, obtrusive, or annoying speech or action is to be well on the way towards the possession of perfect manners. Edmund Burke, the great

English statesman, has left an eulogy of his wife which is one of the most touching and beautiful tributes of conjugal affection preserved to us in literature, second only to John Stuart Mills' tribute to his wife. He says of her that she was not beautiful, but that she possessed a charm that he had never seen equalled in any other woman. "It is not the things that she does that attract and win, so much as the things she refrains from doing," he wrote of her. The first, best qualities of people who attract and delight us are repose and freedom from self-consciousness. Essentially allied to these excellent and indispensable qualities are those of modesty and unobtrusiveness. The well-mannered young girl, like the well-dressed young girl, does not attract attention to herself by anything she does or says. An acute observer of cultured society has said that a person who has no manners

at all has good manners. The highest and best effect of the excellent Delsarte system, so widely studied and taught in our best schools and circles of culture, is to make people unconsciously graceful and natural. It should teach us how to avoid an ungraceful position or attitude rather than instruct us how to assume a consciously graceful one. "She poses," was the just criticism of a cultivated gentleman who had been asked for his opinion of a famous authoress whose receptions were the events of the season in the great city where she lived. The lady had studied and learned how to stand or sit or receive gracefully, but the consciousness of the fact that she was doing just the right and proper thing was written all over her face and demeanor.

This, however, is an obtrusiveness of appearance only. It is a minor defect which almost disappears when brought

into comparison with a voice or action or manner that obtrudes and attracts the attention of indifferent observers. The most common forms of obtrusiveness among thoughtless young people are those of voice, speech and laughter. How unpleasant to be compelled to overhear, in public parlor or in the street or railroad car, conversation of a purely personal nature! How shrill and uncultivated the voices that rise above the din of train or rattle of street-car and convey to us the petty gossip of household or neighborhood. And as to laughter! If only young people knew what a revealer of secrets the laugh is they would, as Emerson says, "keep these entertaining explosions under strict control." The young person who laughs loudly and keeps on laughing; who cannot stop the cachinations caused by an amusing incident or story, especially if the incident relates to or

the story is related by the person who laughs, betrays almost total lack of culture.

The voice in conversation and reading is another unerring revealer of character and culture. Its habitual tone is an unerring index of the inner nature. It is most surprising, when we reflect upon it, how soon the natural, beautiful tone of babyhood and early childhood becomes transformed into the unnatural, artificial, sharp tone of later years. To speak plainly and pronounce words distinctly and beautifully, each word clear and distinct as a coin fresh from the mint, is an almost rare accomplishment.

One of the best "fads" of latter days has been the craze for classes in pronunciation which has swept over so many cities and social circles during the last year or two. But aside from the special matter of pronunciation the quality of tone in the voice deserves

the most careful attention of young people who desire to possess the best acquirements of culture. The nasal tone, the scolding tone, the whine, the pathetic, the wheedling, the yammering, the fawning tone—all may be heard in any assemblage where numbers of people talk freely. No department is so neglected in our schools and none so imperatively needs attention as this of conversational voice culture. By and by, when parents and teachers more fully realize this, some portion of the money now uselessly expended in giving music lessons to pupils who will not practice, and who will never be musicians, will be expended in paying teachers of voice culture as applied to conversation and ordinary reading—not elocution. Awaiting the happy day when this change shall be brought about, young people, especially young girls, need to be cautioned against acquiring any disagreeable quality or

tone of voice. Loudness and shrillness are the qualities of voice attributed to American girls by critical foreigners. By all means and through every exercise in their power let young girls cultivate a natural, unaffected, clear tone of voice and possess themselves of

"That excellent thing in woman."

And here again we are reminded of the difficulty of striking the golden mean in sketching "the genial precepts of a young girl's demeanor." She must not talk too loudly or shrilly, or in such a way as to attract the attention of the indifferent observer, yet neither must she speak in too low a tone, for that may become an affectation even more unpleasant than the obtrusively loud tone. She must not consciously "pose" in a graceful attitude, yet neither must she be so indifferent and unconscious as to throw herself into ungainly and awkward positions. The best and most graceful

carriage of person seems to come from an inborn dignity and self-respect that will never allow the body to take on slouchy, undignified, awkward attitudes. It was remarked of a lady who was an eminent teacher in the days of our grandmothers that even when she became old and feeble and spent much of her time reclining on her couch there was a dignity even in the way she disposed of her arms and limbs that impressed every one, notably those who served her. She did this unconsciously as the result of long years of dignified and graceful carriage. Such a lady as she was could never under any circumstances lean on her elbows at table, or tilt her chair or sit with crossed knees or put her feet on rung of chair or table, even in the privacy of her own home and apartments.

Conceding, then, that the young girl of dignified and refined demeanor will always avoid any action or speech that

will obtrude her personality upon the attention of the uninterested, what shall we say—where in the category of blemishes and failures of perfection shall we place such actions as eating popcorn or fruit or candy on trains or in public places? To say the least it is a questionable taste. Eating is an action that requires all the alleviations of appropriate place and circumstance and all the adjuncts of neatness, beauty and delicacy with which refined social life can surround it to lift it above the plane of the material and animal. Byron is no model or competent critic of refined social life; yet one is reminded of and sympathizes with one of his complaints against his wife, that "he could not bear to see her eat," when one happens to sit behind a party of young people on the train or during intermission at some place of public entertainment, and is compelled for awhile to observe the munching and

crunching that necessarily accompany the disposal of a bag of popcorn or peanuts or a box of candy. It would be a severe test of the attractiveness of the most beautiful and dignified lady in the land to see her eating grapes in the train and spitting the skins out of the window, as a young lady university graduate was recently seen to do. The highest canons of good taste and refinement certainly relegate all eating to its appropriate time and place in the dining-room or at the appropriate hour of refreshment.

It has been well said that "manners are the minor morals." A careful analysis of the causes of bad manners, especially in young people, seems to show us that nearly all the offenses against the "minor morals" can be referred to two causes, selfishness and obtrusiveness. Under the first head can be classed all those offenses against good manners which show a disregard for the rights

or conveniences of others. The young girl who is guilty of the rudeness of rushing or coming into the presence of older people and making known her own wants or requests without reference to whether she is interrupting and annoying those to whom she should pay deference, is both selfish and obtrusive. The principal thought in her mind is her own affairs. From this same cause comes forgetfulness to offer to older people those small deferences which are so beautiful in young people when they are offered unobtrusively. It is indeed almost rare in these days to meet young people who will moderate their voices or restrain their laughter or in any way indicate by their conduct that they respect the presence and the convenience of older people; and this is a most lamentable defect in both character and manners. Selfishness is the cause of scores of small rudenesses and disagree-

able actions, and the young girl who finds that she is not liked by her companions can probably find out the reason if she will simply make a study of her own character and conduct in relation to them. She will probably find that her first thought is always for herself,—that she wants her way, her convenience, her preferences deferred to, instead of being willing to yield her wishes and plans for the sake of the preferences and conveniences of others.

But more bad manners arise from obtrusiveness than from any other cause. Obtrusiveness usually arises from a lack of modesty or of that beautiful humility of spirit which is ever the distinguishing mark of the finest minds. It is one of the characteristics of the true lady (or gentleman) that she never presumes. She does not think her own company or conversation so valuable that she will thrust it upon a friend in unseasonable hours, or unrea-

sonably take up her time because she herself may have nothing to do. The cultivated young girl does not approach two friends who are talking together and without invitation join or break up the conversation; she never intrudes uninvited into the private apartments of a friend: never looks into drawers or exhibits any curiosity about private matters. She never interrupts in conversation, but listens quietly till the person with whom she is conversing finishes what he or she is saying, and then replies. She never indulges in personal familiarities; never toys in public with the hair, or ribbons, or rings of a friend or indulges in those endearments which may be very proper and beautiful in private, but which are at once vulgarized when exhibited in public. She does not borrow or wear the garments or finery of a companion; she does not tell of private affairs or family secrets — neither her own or others;

she does not express positive opinions on subjects about which she knows but little or nothing at all, in the presence of people better informed than herself; she does not talk about herself or her family and friends in general company; she does not offer suggestions or advice, as though her opinions were superior to those whom she advises; she does not even press attentions obtrusively or insist that a friend shall accompany her here or there, remembering that the friend may much prefer her own plans and society. In short, the truly cultivated young girl or woman is, first of all, kind of heart, and, second, self-centered. She is ready to give, but does not oppress with bestowing, and in all her conduct she shows that she possesses that ennobling quality which Shakespeare calls the "girdle of self-restraint."

Are these small matters to be considered in the formation and cultivation

of a beautiful character and demeanor in young girls? By no means. The difference between polish and unpolish, between ugliness and beauty, even in the diamond or gold or silver, consists only in the difference of arrangement of the infinitesimally small particles that lie upon the surface. We often hear good people spoken of as "diamonds in the rough," but in these days of unequaled opportunity for polishing and making beautiful the exterior even of our jewels—our children—we will be satisfied with nothing short of perfection, even in these minor matters. We will at least spare no effort nor instruction that each young girl may be, as the poet Lowell beautifully expresses it,

"Earth's noblest thing, a woman perfected."

A LITTLE SERMON TO SCHOOL-GIRLS.

Be kindly affectioned one toward another with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another. —*Rom.* xii. 10.

Whose adorning . . . let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit which is in the sight of God of great price.—1 *Peter*. iii. 4.

Wherever people are associated together, it will always be found that some are more popular and beloved than others. Taking it for granted that all my young readers would wish to be lovely and beloved by those with whom they are associated, I wish to make a short study of some of those characteristics which always distinguish a lovely or loveable person, and also of some characteristics which

tend to make people unlovely and disagreeable.

But if anyone should at the outset say, "I do not care whether people like me or not, I have no particular wish to be lovely or beloved," what could I answer? Nothing. I could only express my sorrow that the better and higher nature of such an one was so undeveloped, and that the greatest source of true happiness was so unknown and unappreciated. I could only hope that the conscience and the moral nature of such an one might be aroused and quickened by some good and faithful admonition or word of instruction. And right here I wish to call the special attention of my young friends to this fact: Youth is a period given up largely to the work of obtaining an education; but education is of a twofold nature. We have an intellectual nature and we have a spiritual or moral nature. The intellectual powers and

faculties it is possible to educate almost in spite of even the distaste or aversion of the pupil to receiving that education. We can, in a measure, force a knowledge of the sciences upon even reluctant pupils. We can prove to them that three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles, or that an acid and an alkali will combine to form a salt; but we can never force an antagonistic nature to receive a spiritual truth. Your parents or teacher may instruct you that it is wrong to be untruthful or unkind or deceitful, but your own inner natures alone can receive such truths and assimilate them. No human being can compel another human being to be good. Here is where one of the chief anxieties and chief sorrows of parents and teachers arises. There is no anxiety so deep as the anxiety of the good that those they love may be good also; no sorrow so poignant as the sorrow of the heart

over the willful wrong-doing of those near and dear. If at the close of your prescribed school course you should return to your homes, skilled in all the sciences, possessed of extensive knowledge of literature, fine musicians, fine artists, and yet selfish, ungentle, proud or haughty in demeanor, wanting in thoughtfulness for the rights and feelings of others, careless of being unkind, the time spent in your education would largely have been spent in vain.

Among the first characteristics of a person who is lovely and beloved, we must place a kind and gentle manner toward all, kind words and kind deeds, and a restraint of hasty speech or action. In order to possess these qualities, it is not necessary ever to be obtrusive with our attentions. Sometimes people pain us by thrusting upon us attentions which we do not want. There is a kind of officious attentiveness which is really the expression of a

species of vanity. It is true we ought to be observant, and if we see where we can really help others by offering kind acts or services, we ought to be willing to do it. But to young people associated together as schoolmates, the opportunity for exercising gentleness and kindness towards one another comes mostly in the line of daily work. Some pupils are more advanced in their studies than others ; some have had greater advantages in their homes than others : and these differences afford an apportunity for exercising toward each other a spirit of kindness and gentleness. It is one of the most common occurrences in schools for pupils to come in who have not had the advantages which enable them to know how to conduct themselves gracefully in society ; how to dress themselves ; how to use knife, fork, napkin, etc., properly at the table; and while it is of course the duty of teachers to instruct them in all these

things, it is also the imperative duty of their companions to refrain from unkind criticism or laughing at and making sport of blunders which may arise only from lack of information. Very often these students are "jewels in the rough," of the rarest and finest quality.

You may have heard the story of Daniel Webster, when he came in from his father's farm to enter upon his collegiate course, and went to board with one of the professors who had several students boarding in his family. Daniel had certainly never been taught good manners at the table, however many other good things he had been taught in his home, for he immediately attracted the attention of all the other boarders by sitting with his knife and fork held upright in each hand and resting on the table while he masticated his food. The professor quelled the rising laughter among his fellow-students by a firm glance of reproof, but

said nothing to Daniel. He had observed that the boy was sensitive, and he now had the problem before him how he should correct this awkwardness in Daniel without wounding his feelings; and he took the following method: Calling one of the senior boarders to him before the next meal, he said: "We want to break our young friend of his awkward way of holding his knife and fork, and we don't want to hurt his feelings. Now I want you, at supper to-night, to hold your knife and fork the same way, and then I will call your attention to it and tell you it is not the right and proper way to do." The student agreed, and so between the kind intention of the professor and the kind willingness of the student the embryo statesman was taught an important lesson without being pained and abashed by his ignorance.

In marked contrast with this incident is one which personally I knew to hap-

pen in a school. A little country girl who had recently become an inmate of the school knocked at the room of her neighbor, a young lady who had been brought up amid all the refinements of life, and asked her if she would lend her her hair-brush. Two or three other girls happened to be in the room, and this young lady replied, "Hadn't you better ask me for my tooth-brush? In this school, hair-brushes are private property." Never did the little country girl forget this rude rebuke, although she very shortly learned that among cultivated and refined people hair-brushes are considered private property. But however cultivated externally the young lady was who thus rudely rebuffed even the ignorance of her companion, her conduct showed a spirit uncultivated in gentleness and kindness.

It often happens in schools that some become general favorites because per-

haps they are blessed with good looks, or are able to dress with good taste and becomingly, or are possessed of a certain piquancy of manner and conversational powers which attract and entertain. There are others equally good and talented who are not blessed with comeliness, who are not bright and winning in conversation, who are awkward in dress and manner. What kindness and considerateness is due from the more favored to the less favored! How careful should school-girls, and not school-girls only, but everybody, be to extend courtesy and kindness to those of their number who are apt to be neglected, to be left lonely and forgotten while more favored ones enjoy special pleasures! I do not mean by this that we are to be equally intimate and equally fond of all our daily associates, but we ought to be equally kind. Our especial endearments and kindnesses and attentions to our par-

ticular friends ought to be in a measure kept for private expression, so that we may not wound the feelings of those less attractive, or less endowed with bodily and mental graces, by contrast or comparison.

To aid us in cultivating this spirit of kindness, no maxim is more useful than that laid down by Christ: "Whatsoever ye would that others should do unto you, do ye even so unto them." One of the best tests we can apply to ourselves, is to imagine ourselves in the place of others. Suppose we were conscious of homely features, ungainly forms and awkward manners, or of lack of information or knowledge; suppose we were in such straitened circumstances that we were obliged to wear coarse, cheap, unsuitable or unbecoming garments; how would we feel and how would we wish to be treated? And if we find within ourselves an unwillingness to be judged by this standard, or

to conform our conduct to it, then we should realize that we do wrong, that we are wrong in spirit. Then should come the conscious effort to do right, to change our spirit from selfishness to unselfishness, from unkindness to kindness. This is the work that no human being can do for us. Every individual soul must pass through that struggle alone. Whenever we are conscious of the necessity of a decision between doing right and doing wrong, even though we may feel indisposed to do the right and disposed to do the wrong, yet if we can *will* to do the right we have taken a step toward God and heaven; we have begun the unfolding of the moral and spiritual nature.

Now I have before said that an intellectual culture may be, so to speak, veneered upon us, but a spiritual culture must come from within outward. In botany you learn of two kinds of plants—those which grow by external

accretions, as bulbs, which are called exogenous; and plants which grow within outward, which are called endogenous. A great philosopher has said that "man is that noble endogenous plant which grows, like the palm, from within outward." The culture of the heart and the growth of the spiritual nature is wholly individual; it depends on ourselves alone. Parents and teachers can furnish the surroundings and the accessories which they hope will most help to nourish this spiritual growth, but they can do no more. And often how bitterly are they disappointed when they see that, in spite of admonition and instruction and entreaty and example, and every external help and incentive, the inner nature, the heart, the soul of child or pupil is not assimilating spiritual truth, is not growing "in grace and in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

And now I pass from the considera-

tion of that experience which is the foundation of a lovely character to consider some of the forms of outward expression of this inward character. I have said that we may feel indisposed to do right; we may really prefer and like best the wrong; nevertheless if we *will* to do what is right we have gained a victory. So it may be a great help to us in gaining this inward victory to familiarize ourselves with rules for conduct or expression. Suppose, for instance, we know we are liable to give way to bad tempers and to speak hastily and harshly. We may even feel that it is a relief to speak thus hastily or harshly, but if we *will* to control our tempers we may find a great help in resolving never to speak in a loud or harsh tone of voice. You all know that the scolding or quarreling tone of voice is loud and harsh. If we resolve never to allow ourselves to use this tone, it will help us to control our tempers, and

it will also be an obedience to one of the rules of good manners.

We call a well-mannered person a cultivated person; and this culture consists mainly in kindness and gentleness of manner, in self-restraint, and in unobtrusiveness. The real reason for every true rule of good manners is some moral reason. The true reason why we are forbidden by good manners to do certain things is that the doing of such things gives pain or causes inconvenience to some one. Why do the rules of good manners forbid the slamming of doors, or noisy running along halls or up and down stairs, or loud talking or boisterous laughter? Because such noises inflict pain on those who hear them, if they are of refined sensibilities. For the same reason it is bad manners to drum on a piano, or to drum on table or desk or chair, or to shuffle the feet, or to make any noise that distracts or obtrudes. Why is it

bad manners to come late to meals, to be unpunctual, to keep people waiting? Because we inflict pain and inconvenience upon those who are in a certain measure dependent for their comfort on our promptness and punctuality. Why is it bad manners to sprawl in one's seat, to assume ungainly attitudes, to make grimaces, or to munch peanuts or apples in the cars or in public places? For the same reason. We make those who witness such conduct uncomfortable, and inflict pain upon them.

One very common cause of discomfort and pain caused by young people to their parents and teachers is want of thoughtfulness and consideration. For one-half the faults for which young people need to be reproved the reply is, "I didn't think." Now, while we cannot expect young folks to exercise the thoughtfulness and judgment of maturer people, we certainly have a right

to expect that they will endeavor to acquire a habit of thoughtfulness in regard to the convenience and interests of others. It is this want of thoughtfulness that often betrays young people into doing very improper and injurious things. Parents and teachers are constantly troubled by finding that their children and pupils do things which they never thought of forbidding them to do. That which all good and faithful teachers strive to do is to develop in their pupils such a sense of propriety and thoughtfulness and such a high moral sense as will make them *a law for right unto themselves.* They want to cultivate and to see them cultivating in themselves a strong practical common-sense and a wise sense of propriety. Without such common-sense and innate sense of propriety, the longest set of rules would be useless. For instance, if your teachers were to set about making a set of rules do

you suppose any one of them would have thought of making such rules as: "Young ladies are not permitted to go to the roof of the house and sit with their feet dangling over the railings of the balcony;" or "Young ladies must not go into people's pastures and catch their ponies to go riding;" or "When young ladies are out riding in a buggy it is not allowable for one of the young ladies to ride on the horse which the others are driving."

A hundred rules might be gotten up forbidding the doing of a hundred things, the only evil of which is that they are outlandish and unbecoming; not modest, or ill-mannered, and behind which there is no evil intent—only thoughtlessness. The same endowment of common-sense ought to teach young people to do those things which will promote their health, and not to do those things which would injure it. The greatest blessing to a young per-

son, especially to a young woman, is good health; but unless she will take care of it herself, it is an almost hopeless task to attempt to take care of it for her. You may have heard the somewhat slangy expression sometimes made about stupid and conceited young men, that they "don't know enough to come in when it rains." It is, however, an almost just complaint of many a pretty and otherwise sensible young woman that she apparently doesn't know enough to put on overshoes when it rains, or to change thin clothing for thick when it grows cold. There is needed among young girls everywhere such a development of common-sense as will prevent this senseless and thoughtless conduct.

And now let us consider some of the rewards that will come to those who give attention to the culture of the spirit. Emerson says that "it is our manners that associate us," and this

is one of his truest observations. We all wish, or we all should wish, to become fitted for association with the good, the refined, the intelligent, the cultivated, with those who have a noble purpose in life. Into such society there is but one passport—intelligence, and gentle, quiet, cultivated manners, coupled with a like noble and earnest purpose. Possessed of these, any person may be sure of a welcome in the best society, however plain in appearance or dress. Wanting in these, good looks and fine dress are of no avail to secure the coveted association. Remember, I am now speaking of the society of intellectual, refined, and cultivated people, and not of mere fashionable society. But to gain friendly and equal access to this best society, the culture of heart and mind must be genuine; it must be thorough, deep, sincere. The young person whose education of mind and heart is shallow

and superficial, who has no definite aim in life, may well fear to submit to the critical tests sure to be applied by such society.

I cannot better illustrate my meaning than by relating to you two incidents that have come under my own personal observation. You all know that in our old Eastern cities, which have so long been the homes of wealth and learning, is to be found a society almost unequalled for its high standard of intellectual culture and refined manners as well as for beneficent actions. Two young Western women whom I have known, aspired to gain access to and meet with recognition in a certain famous circle of such people in one of these Eastern cities. Both young women were graduates of Western universities, and had had really exceptional advantages for acquiring a thorough collegiate education. One had been surrounded by every possible helpful

condition. Fond parents, possessed of abundance of this world's goods, and admiring friends, had done everything in their power to secure for her freedom from all other cares while she was pursuing her studies. Being thus helped and petted and praised and encouraged, she seemed to feel that all circumstances and everybody's convenience and comfort must give way for her plans and interests. The other young girl was the eldest daughter of a poor widow. She struggled through the university by teaching in vacation; renting a poor little room in the town where the university was situated, and cooking her own food, doing her own washing and ironing, living in the plainest way, wearing cheap clothing, and eating the plainest food, while she was pursuing her studies. Her struggles with poverty and bitter circumstances taught her sympathy and kindness and helpfulness; and though

she was plain, very plain, in face and figure, the gentle kindness of her spirit was apparent to all. As time passed on after their graduation, both of these young women gained the goal of their hopes and ambitions: an introduction to this brilliant and cultivated circle of people through certain literary clubs. And furthermore, both secured an invitation to read a paper before the same literary society during the same winter. The first-named young lady was visiting friends, while the second had secured a position as teacher. When the first young lady appeared before the society, her dress of velvet, point lace, and diamonds, was so striking as to be obtrusive. Her paper was fairly good, but contained nothing of any permanent value. Her self-consciousness and evident desire to be conspicuous had the effect of repelling the earnest and thoughtful men and women who composed the society. Her essay and her-

self were alike quietly dropped; and to this day she cannot understand why. She calls the members of the society proud, haughty, and exclusive, and denounces the city where these people live as pedantic, disagreeable, and unsocial. Before this same club came our quiet, unostentatious, plain young friend of the toilsome life. Her dress was as plain as her face, but her paper was rich in information and filled with the results of a deep and earnest observation. Around her gathered the good men and women who knew how to appreciate such a spirit, and from thenceforward she was one of them. Every winter since the reading of her first essay I have found her name among the list of those who are leaders in the world of thought and of benevolent action. With pride in the success of a genuine Western girl, I have often observed her name among the invited guests present at receptions given to

distinguished authors and philanthropists both of our own country and of Europe. Why did she succeed against such odds, when the other failed with all her advantages? Simply because she was possessed of the true, deep, thorough genuine culture, both of mind and heart, which alone associates the best people together. To her, "plain living and high thinking" was a life-long practice, and she was at home and happy with the good and the learned.

Would you be prepared to attain a like reward? Cultivate her spirit; imitate her example.

LETTER X.

THE FINEST FEMININE ART.

THE MAKING OF A HOME.

My Dear Daughter:—One of the questions most frequently discussed in these days of the higher education of girls and women is whether that education tends to fit or unfit them for the duties of the home.

My observation is that the faculty of home-making is a kind of spiritual gift—its cultivation like that of any other gift—an art. If the college girl or woman has the home-making instinct, knows its worth and has an ambition—a most worthy one—to regard home-making as a fine art, her college education will greatly aid her in so doing. If she has not this instinct her learning will only emphasize the sad defect. College education in itself neither fits nor unfits a woman for a home-maker.

What is the basis of this home-making instinct? It is first of all the affectionate cherishing of family affection, the love for the natural inmates of the home—father, mother, brothers, sisters, and later, husband and children. Second, it is that inclusive spirit that wishes to share all good things with others; that takes them into account; has respect for their feelings and needs; wishes to make them happy; to comfort and console, if need be. The word gracious often carries with it a suggestion of condescension, but used in its right meaning it is what all home-makers needs must be—gracious—that is benevolently interested in others than themselves. This spirit will cause the natural home-maker to observe and seek to have prevail in the home, whatever conditions tend to the comfort and happiness of all.

What are the essential material elements of comfort and harmony in the home? Certainly they are system, order,

neatness, a comfortable and attractive home table and the division of the work of the home so that all shall share in its labors and in its rewards.

Now no home can be thus organized without a guiding and organizing spirit in the lead. Ordinarily we expect this organization to center round the wife and mother, but sometimes it is the daughter who first brings about this happy condition of things, and not unfrequently it is the college bred daughter who gives the benefit of her trained and cultured mind to bringing order out of chaos in a home. Noble and worthy is her work in so doing.

"He works with God, who in the slightest thing
Order from chaos by his toil would bring."

But to do this requires persistent effort, self-denial, patience, oftentimes wearying toil. Yet are not its rewards worth all the effort it costs? Who that has lived for a time in a home where

disorder, slip-shod untidiness, irregular, poorly prepared meals, the shifting of disagreeable tasks to other shoulders has prevailed, with the incidental grumbling and irritation that always accompany personal discomfort in the home; and has then been transferred to the home where order, neatness and quietness prevail; where the rising bell may be depended upon as certainly as the rising sun; where the comfortable—no matter how simple—meal is on time and all can arrange their goings and comings with reference to this centerstance of the home—who, I say, that has experienced this change but feels that the difference is that between the cheerful sunlight and the depressing fog!

The home presided over by the true home-making spirit has an atmosphere that makes itself felt almost upon entrance and impresses even the casual stranger. It is not the cost or quality of the furnishings nor the size of the

home that can give this atmosphere. Two homes in the most widely different conditions of life recall themselves to my memory whenever I reflect upon this art of home-making. One was a pioneer's home, which I once visited in the far northwest. The living room was about twenty feet square, with a stairway in the corner leading to the kitchen below, while on one side it opened into two small bedrooms. The walls were roughly plastered, but gleaming white and clean from a coat of whitewash. The rough floor was noticeably clean as also was the rug of rag carpet in the center of the room. Everything was clean, from the windows with their unpainted woodwork and simple white curtains, to the brick hearth and fireplace "with sprigs of fennel gay." There were a few plain substantial and comfortable chairs and a wide, comfortable looking chintz-covered lounge. On one table books and magazines were neatly piled; on

another sat a work basket. In the window sills were a few thrifty, well-cared-for, blooming plants.

It looked as though somebody took a loving care of the plain room with its plain furnishings—and such was the fact. By and by the simple supper of delicious biscuits with honey and berries with cream and fragrant tea, emphasized the delight of the home table. Everything seemed to be done easily. The hostess was not flurried, nor fatigued, and after supper was over we helped each other clear the table and wash the dishes, the large bowl of hot water and fragrantly clean tea towels, seemingly really artistic accessories of the meal. Then we sat down to a leisurely evening with talk about books, old times and old friends. It was a visit that cheered and strengthened our hearts and will always remain a treasure of memory.

The other home, almost palatial in

comparison, had the same atmosphere of being lovingly cared for and of having for its first consideration that its members should be comfortable in the roomy parlor where no chair was too good or frail to sit upon; where a few fresh flowers every day reminded the inmates or visitors that some one wished to make things pleasant for them. On the walls a few good pictures attracted, but did not confuse the eye. In the adjoining parlor stood the open piano and the larger table covered with books. That home was noted for its delightful hospitality to small companies who frequently gathered around its dinner table, not for mere formal exchange of courtesies, but for such real feast of reason and flow of soul as only a cultured, intelligent and competent hostess can achieve.

I ask myself what was the special characteristic of the makers of these homes, so noticeably attractive in their atmosphere of good cheer and comfort.

I feel sure that it was that each home-maker regarded the care of her home as an art which she loved to practice. It was her first thought, her first care. This did not mean that no outside interests were regarded. On the contrary, one was an active worker in her church enterprises, the other was a valued member of a large woman's club. Such outside interests are not at all incompatible with the practice of the fine art of home-making, but they must be made secondary. In these homes they were made the means of bringing into the home subjects of general interest and the enlivenment of change of thought and scene. But fundamental to both was the willingness of the home-maker to give time, thought and steady continuous effort to the making of her home. Fundamental also was her high appreciation of what a true and beautiful home life stands for in all times and in every place.

These characteristics that I have described may be said to present only the more material aspects of the home, and this may be true. Nevertheless, on these foundations are built the best spiritual life of the home, of which it is true as said St. Paul, "We have first that which is natural, afterwards that which is spiritual." The comfortable and beautiful routine of daily life tends to good temper, cheerfulness, good health and good courage. I have often thought that the breakfast table really gives the keynote of the day. For sending one refreshed and invigorated to one's daily tasks, I know of nothing more effective than a snowy table cloth, and a good breakfast (however simple) neatly served. And if, in addition the smile and cheer of loving hearts accompany the workers to their tasks, they have little left to ask for of earth's best gifts. They have Heaven's best gift, "A happy home."

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The charm of fine manners